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ABSTRACT

These materials discuss the history of Chicago, Illinois, including prominent persons in the city's past, and landmarks for which Chicago is well known. A number of activities are suggested, some of which concern Chicago's industries, historical sites, architecture, newspapers, ethnic groups, and history. A list of books about Chicago for children, a list of filmstrips and videos, and a bibliography are included. (DB)

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Teaching About City Life In Chicago

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What does the word Chicago mean. The etymology of the word came from the Potawatomi Indians after their word "Che-ca-gou" which means wild onions or skunk cabbage. Chicago has many names. Some of them are the Second City, Windy City, and the City in a Garden. The life and history of the town is exciting and sometimes notorious. I will examine what the history of Chicago encompasses; places of interest; and activities I can use in my classroom related to history, geography, and anthropology.

Pere Marquette and Louis Joliet were the first men to discover the land in 1674. At that time, they saw that this area would be a good passage route to the Gulf of Mexico. The area was not purchased by the United States until 1783. The people who inhabited the area were Indians. The first non-Indian settler was Jean Baptiste du Salble. He and his wife moved to Chicago from New York in 1779. More settlers arrived in 1803 when Fort Dearborn was built near the mouth of the Chicago River, on the south side, where the land was high. This fort was formulated primarily to fight off the Indians. At this time, the area was all marshes and swamp area. More people began to migrate to the city in 1825 when the Erie Canal, which was engineered by George Pullman, was opened. In 1835, the area became a big trading post. The big pull for immigrants to go to Chicago was to work on a canal that linked the Great Lakes to the Illinois River to the Mississippi River and eventually to the Gulf. This forced the Indians to move beyond the Mississippi River. The city became incorporated in 1837. This is also the year that the first schools, newspaper companies, and meat packing business started. The first

mayor was William Butler Ogden. He was very involved in making the city a bigger place. With his riches, he built the Chicago's first railroad. It was not until 1848 that the city was linked to the East Coast by telegraph.

The famous O'Leary's cow supposedly stated the fire of October 8, 1871. It has been found that the conditions during that month were extremely hot and dry, in which only one inch of rain had fallen in the whole summer. During that time, fires were springing up all over the city. The main fire started on DeKoven Street, on which the O'Leary's lived, and wiped out most of the city. The reason the fire swept so rapidly was due to the fire departments lack of technology and lack of organization, that most of the houses and sidewalks were made of wood, and that fires started in different areas throughout the city. The fire did not slow down until twenty-five hours after it started due to a light rain. By the time the fire was over, more that 2,000 acres of land and many houses and places of business were destroyed. The fire destruction hit about four miles of land and the fire is estimated to cost about $125,000 per minute. Unfortunately, three hundred people died and 10,000 people lost their homes (Harris 1980). The people of the town decided that they would rebuild the city better than it was before and not to use wood as their primary way to build the houses.

Cyrus McCormick started the Chicago Tribune on June 10, 1847 on the corner of Lake and LaSalle. He pressed out 400 copies of the newspaper on a hand press. The most notable invention he made was the reaper. This invention harvested wheat and was the prime reason for creating the company of International Harvester. Another famous McCormick is Robert Rutherford. McCormick was a very affluent person in Chicago. He did many thing to improve the city. Some of the jobs he had

were as a journalist, editor of the Chicago Tribune, a lawyer, a public official, and a manufacturer.

Jane Addams was a very prominent person in Chicago. In 1889, Jane Addams moved from Rockford and rented a few rooms on the edge of the city from Charles Hull. She did this so she could live near the cities poor, so she could discover their problems and tend to their needs. It only took a few years for Jane to take over the whole settlement and soon it was among the most famous building in the city.

Radio was a big thing in Chicago. In the early part of the 1920s, WGN and WMAQ were the two popular stations. People tuned into such shows as "Amos 'n' Andy" and the Cubs, which was announced by the 'voice of the Cubs' who was Ronald Reagan. Television soon decreased the popularity of the radio and shows like "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie" and "Sesame Street" were broadcast from Chicago studios. Many famous comic strips have also originated in the Chicago newspapers. The list includes, Gasoline Alley, Dick Tracy, Buck Rogers, Toonerville Trolley, and Little Orphan Annie.

Recently, Chicago has been known for its famous Second City club. The building where Second City is housed, was at one time an old Chinese laundry that was converted into a cabaret theater. Some of the famous comedians that made their start there were David Steinberg, Robert Klein, Alan Arkin, John Belushi, Dan Ackroyd, Gilda Radner, and Eddie Murphy. Many of these people worked on "Saturday Night Live". Chicago has produced many good writers. The list includes Carl Sandburg, Eugene Field, Ernest Hemingway, James T. Fareel. The creator of "Tarzan" also originated in Chicago.

Chicago has many well know landmarks. Each one make the city special. The heart of the city is a rectangle formed by Walbash, Wells,

Lake, and Van Buren Streets. This rectangle is called the Loop because of a band of elevated railroad tracks, which are known as the "L", that branch from these streets to other parts of the city. Another famous areas is called "The Magnificent Mile.". This is the area across the Michigan Avenue Bridge. Some of the buildings on the street include the Tribune Tower, Wrigley Building, Saks Fifth Avenue, Gucci, Tiffany, Water Tower Place, Playboy Building, and most famous of all is the John Handcock Center. The Magnificent Mile ends with the Drake Hotel and there begins the Gold Coast. The Chicago post office is the world's largest. Congress-290 Interstate runs underneath this wonderful building. The Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park is a sight for many visitors. It was built in the memory of Clarence Buckingham, who was once the director of the Art Institute, by his sister. The city also has many museums. One of the most famous is the Museum of Science and Industry. This structure was built for the World's Fair of 1893. Within its walls is a vast amount of knowledge. Some of the exhibits it includes are the human body, modern technology, coal mining, and a real submarine. Other museums include the Field Museum, John G. Shedd Aquarium, and the Alder Planetarium. The Field Museum was built with an eight million dollar gift from the will of Marshall Field. The exhibits inside include anthropology, geology, botany, and zoology. The Shedd Aquarium was opened in 1930 from a donation of three million dollars from John G. Shedd, who was the president of Marshall Field and Company. The Adler Planetarium and Astronomical Museum was the first planetarium to be build in America. On the south side is a very prestiges school called the University of Chicago. The campus has an "ivy league" appeal. The school has distinguished itself as the first to develop the atomic bomb. Lincoln Park Zoo has many exotic

animals as well as a children petting zoo and a farm. Soldier Field was designed to be similar to the Coliseum of Rome. This stadium was build to honor the sons of Chicago, that were in the World Wars.

Chicago is known as the birth place for modern architecture. Van Osdel was a famous architect. He had the idea for making structures fireproof, as a result of the fires in 1871. H.H. Richardson was the architect who build the Chicago School of Architecture Foundation and Designed, as well as, Marshall Fields on State Street. Skyscrapers were so prevalent due the the huge steel factories in Chicago. Architect William Jenney was the first person to build a building that was formed around an iron cage. The first real skyscraper was designed by John Root. He decided to build a building on huge concrete rafts which were reinforced by railroad ties. His first building was ten stories high. Louis Sullivan made a contribution to the city by designing the Stock Exchange Building as well as the Carson, Pirie Scott department store. One of the most famous architects is Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright designed many very fine homes throughout the city and the suburbs.

Today Chicago stretches itself 25 miles to the north and south and 15 miles west from the lake, not including the growing suburbs. It is becoming noted as a great place to film movies and settings for television shows. Harpo Studios was recreantly built for that purpose. Chicago's Stock Exchange is known for their selling and trading of the products grown in Illinois. Although the city is not the second largest in the country any more, its popularity has not decreased.

Activities For My Classroom about Chicago.

After discussing the different types of industries, have the students do the following activities:

There were and are many different kinds of industries and stores in Chicago. Some of the most famous are the meat packing plants and the catalog distributions. The students should find an example of the different types of industry. What happened in the companies history? Who founded it? What does the company produce? Where is the plant or store located? The students will do a inventory list of all of these things.

Have the students look at different types of machinery. What is the machine used for? Who invented it? What year? Do we still use this piece of machinery today?

After discussing the historical sites of the city, have the students do the following activities:

Have the students pretend they are a tour guide in the city. Have them write up statements to say to the tourists about each place of interest. The students also need to map out a plan of travel for the bus of train. The goal is to not go back and forth through the city. Have the students find pictures of the places of interest so they could present it to the class.

Since most of the students live within thirty miles of the city, have them collect newspapers, magazines, and pictures on where they have been in the city and where they would like to visit.

Have the students create a bulletin board promoting their favorite place in Chicago? Write a summary of why it is special to them or why do they enjoy it.

Many famous people have lived in the city. Have the student write up reports on these people. Where did they live? What school did they go to? Some famous people are John and Jim Belushi, Jesse Jackson, and Walter Payton.

Have the students find a listings of the street names in Chicago. Does your last name appear on the list? What area is it located in? Name the relative location(what is it around)?

What are the names of the famous airports of the area? How might we find out that information? How could we find out information about taking a trip?

Follow the canal through the city. Where does it begin? Where does it end? How long is it?

Railroads, waterways, bus lines, and air routes all serve the people of the city. Have the students make a map showing the lives of travel which make the transportation city.

After talking about the different types of architecture, have the students create the following things:

Before the fire of 1871, the houses were all made of wood. Do a role play in which the students pretend that they lived in 1871. Have them design a typical house for that era.

After a visit to the Chicago Sun Times or Tribune, have the students do the following activities:

The students should realize that history is people. Have them interview a relative or friend that does or has lived in Chicago. Have the student make up a list of prepared questions to ask them. Have the students compare their interviews to each other.

The Chicago Tribune has played a big part in the history of Chicago. Have the students write about how their visit into the city was. The students should include pictures, editorials, and the weather.

Have the students compare the prices of different years of the newspaper. Compare what was in the news as well as the prices on different items.

After discussing the different types of ethnic groups, the following activities can be done:

Write a letter to a students in a Chicago school. What do they do differently than you do? Same? Do they live in the same type of house? Do they live near anything exciting?

Find out what different ethnic groups make to eat. Are any groups similar? Have the students make a food festival of many different types of food.

After discussing the history of Chicago, a have the students do the following activities:

The history of Chicago goes back a long time. Have the student create a data base of a time line. Have them include a minimum of 30 entries to add to the list.

Have the students find what the name of the Indian groups that lived in the area before the pioneers settled there.

Have the students find the principle route the pioneers took to get to the city. Which way was it by land? Which way by water?

Look at some pictures of a particular time period. Have the students tell a story about the person in that picture. What does that person do for a living? How much money does he earn? What does he drive? What does his house look like?

Find a song from the 1920s. How did the music sound? How did they dance? Did they have a stereo like we do today? Who were the famous singers of that time?

Have the student read a story about Jane Addams. Have them come up with different ways of helping their community just like Jane Addams did.

Have the students create a crossword puzzle of the famous people, places, or events of Chicago. Make it a contest of who could add the most amount of names.

Have the students find out what famous movies were created in Chicago. ("About Last Night", "My Bodyguard", "Blues Brothers", "Risky Business", "Ordinary People", "Breakfast Club", "Sixteen Candles") What are the different sites you have seen in the movie?

After discussing what is happening now in the city, the student can do the following activities:

There are many different type of restaurants located all over the city. Have the students choose a restaurant; design a route to get to the restaurant; calculate the gas, tolls, and parking to and from the restaurant; and find the cost of the meal including tax and tip. What would the total time be for the meal? How much would the total cost be?

Have the students make a life size map of the city and have theme label the street, building, rivers, and landmarks.

Have the students watch the local new. Have them find out two top stories from the local news and two from the national news, two sports scores, and the weather report for the next day. Have the students compare their stories.

Have the students choose their favorite comic strip from the newspaper. Have them create what would happen next in the scene or have them create a new dialogue for the characters.

Have the students do a mad scramble of the names of the different areas in the city. An example is Gold Coast would be Lodg Tcoas.

Conclusion

Chicago is a very culturally diverse community that is full of excitement and history. I have learned about events and people that were only briefly mentioned before in my life. I always was curious on how the name of the city was formed and how the city first developed.

I was shocked to find that so much of the city was developed by a few prominent families. Marshall Field and the McCormick family help build the city into what it is today. I would have never thought that Marshall Field was the main contributor to the many museums as well as being a major mogul in business.

It is strange to think that the major boom of business happened after the Great Fire. I tend to think that the fire would have happened eventually due to the hot and dry conditions of the times as well as for the wood materials used to construct most of the city.

I found that this project was very worth the time spent on it. I feel that it will be a very useful resource to use in my classroom. I would think the children would be interested in learning about the town that lies less that twenty miles away from their houses.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN ABOUT CHICAGO

Berkow, Ira. The DuSalbe Panthers: The Greatest Blackest, Saddest Team From the Meanest Street in Chicago. New York: Atheneum 1978. 188 pages.

This is an account of the 1954 Illinois High School State Championship basketball game between the DuSable Panthers, the first all-black team to make it to the finals, and a team from Mount Vernon High School.

Deaver, Julie Reece. Say Goodnight, Gracie. New York: Harper and Row. 1988. 214 pages.

When a car accident kills her best friend Jimmy, with whom she has shared everything from childhood escapades to breaking into the professional theater scene in Chicago, the seventeen-year-old Morgan must find her own way of coping with his death.

Deegan, Paul J. Michael Jordan: Basketball's Soaring Star. Minneapolis: Lerner Publication Co, 1988. 55 pages.

This book describes the life and career of the Chicago Bulls basketball player who became the first player in 24 years to score more than 3,000 points in one season.

King, Martha Bennett. The Key to Chicago. Philadelphia: JB Lippincott Company, 1961. 127 pages.

This is a survey of Chicago's history, points of interest, and industry.

McCague, James. When Chicago was Young. Champaign, IL: Garrard Publishing Company, 1971. 95 pages.

This is an account of the rugged and energetic days of early Chicago from its beginnings as a settlement of Checkagou to the Great Fire.

Pfeiffer, Christine. Chicago. A Downtown America Book. MN: Sillion Press, 1988. 60 pages.

This book introduces the city of Chicago. It describes the past and the present. There is a description of the different neighborhoods, the attractions, and the festivals.

Phelan, Mary Kay. The Story of the Great Chicago Fire 1871. N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell Company,1971. 191 pages.

This book describes the causes, events, and the after math of the 1871 fire that destroyed a large area of Chicago.

Rothaus, James. Chicago White Sox. Creative Education, 1987. 46 pages.

A history of the baseball team that was founded in 1900. They won their first pennant this year.

FILMSTRIPS AND VISUALS

Bailey, Robert E. "Early Chicago: 1833-1871" Springfield, IL 1986.

This encompasses 50 photographic reproductions of documents from the files of the Chicago City Council from the date Chicago was incorporated as a town to the Great Fire of 1871.

Davis, James E. "Our Community, Chicago and It's Suburbs." Fla: Graphic Learning Corp, 1986.

This is a 12 minute, 35 mm film that presents a tour of the city using a blend of historical and modern photographs, contemporary music, and poetic script. 12 through adult.

"Sweet Home Chicago" Madison, Wisconsin: Hawkhill Associates, 1977.

This film provides 80 lessons for the third grade teacher. It's purpose is to supplement a unit on Chicago. It includes 10 desk maps, 10 pens, 1 teacher guide, and 10 study books.

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Kirkland, Caroline, 1919. Chicago Yesterdays. Daughaday and Company p. 297.

Schmidt, William E. 1990, "What's doing in Chicago." The New York Times. V. 140. (Nov 4): p.10.